

**Iowa Department of Education
Bureau of Nutrition, Health and Transportation Services
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
Equipment Assistance Grants for School Food Authorities**

Questions and Answers April 24, 2009

(Continuation of the Questions and Answers from the April 10, 2009 memorandum)

Q.33. One of our school buildings was severely impacted by the floods/disasters of last summer, even though the District is getting some financial support from FEMA and/or District insurance, it has not or will not cover all of our expenses, can we apply for school food service equipment grant funds?

A.33. Yes, as long as dollars for the equipment have not already been expended or obligated from another source, you may apply for food service equipment assistance grant funds. Part of your rationale for the need for the equipment would be this unique circumstance.

Q.34. We have built a new middle school which we will be moving into this summer. We have several needs as far as equipment and our middle school is in the 50% category for free and reduced meals. Can we apply for equipment assistance funds?

A.34. Yes, the district may apply for funds for one or more pieces of equipment for the middle school, if procurement of the equipment is not already obligated from another source. Please see related Q. 15 and Q. 17 from first Q and A posting.

Q.35. I know that the letter said priority would be given to schools with 50% and above free and reduced, just wondering if there is a possibility that money would be leftover for other schools or if they will take the \$823,633.00 and use just for those schools?

A.35. Each SFA participating in the NSLP is eligible to submit an application to receive a NSLP equipment assistance grant. Per USDA, State agencies must comply with the statutory requirement that grants are to be based on the need for equipment assistance in participating schools with priority (or more weight) given to schools in which not less than 50 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced price meals. The Department has no way of knowing how many applications will be submitted, the number of schools applying with 50% or more eligibility, the total dollar value of requests that will be received, or the relative need for the equipment until all applications received are reviewed and scored.

Q.36. Is application for the ARRA Equipment Assistance Grant something that will require board approval prior to applying for funds?

A.36. No, unless district procedures would require approval. As part of the School Food Authority Application form there is a certifying statement with required signatures from the superintendent, business manager, authorized representative, and food service director.

Q.37. We are a residential care facility with a drug treatment program participating in the National School Lunch Program. We provide education to 22 youth that live in our facility. We have a kitchen that serves clients in our youth residential treatment program. We have a commercial refrigerator and a commercial freezer which both need to be replaced. Would we be eligible to apply for an ARRA Equipment Assistance Grant?

A.37. Yes. All schools/organizations participating in the National School Lunch Program may apply. See related guidance defining equipment and also Q. 7. and Q. 8. for possible implications in your situation.

Q.38. Can you buy a computer, monitor, and printer with grant funds if it is used to run the lunch program (scanning meal tickets, tracking meal accounts, generating reports, online reimbursement, etc)? Can you bundle them together in one application?

A.38. Maybe. This would depend on a number of factors see related Q. 12. Regarding point-of-service systems, this may not be applicable if you are replacing equipment versus just starting to look at procuring a system. See Q.18 if the value per-unit (bundled or not) would be less than \$5,000, unless you have a lower local threshold set for reporting equipment as assets in your financial statements. Also see Q. 28 and 29 and 30 that discuss “attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired.” Depending on how you would be using these, might be allowable to combine these items in determining if the threshold for equipment is met. This would need to be justified and clarified as part of your application.

Q.39. We are 2 separate districts that whole-grade share grades 6-12 but maintain a PK-5 in each district. We have a shared Superintendent and Business Manager. We are working on submitting grant applications for an outdoor walk-in cooler/freezer unit for an elementary school in each district. We don’t want to compromise the process in any way, but the needs/focus question answers are the same for the two buildings. Will are chances of being funded be reduced by responding in the same manner to the Focus Area questions and justifying the equipment the same way?

A.39. No. Responses should reflect equipment needs as related to one or more of the four focus areas. If in your judgment the situations are identical, the chances of being funded would not be impacted because of identical responses.

Q.40. We are doing a major renovation and expansion of our food service area over the course of the next 12 months and it will include new walk-in freezers amongst other equipment. Can we encumber the grant funds and then expend them next summer when the construction is actually finished?

A.40. While there is no specific end date for the ARRA grant awards, the grants should be tied to the necessary period of performance and aligned with the purpose and intent of the ARRA grants. This is to concurrently improve infrastructure in the NSLP and provide an economic stimulus. Therefore, SFAs are encouraged to fully expend their equipment assistance funds within three (e) months of award. In general, the periods of performance associated with any grant should align with the amount of reasonable time necessary to accomplish the purpose of the grant and no longer.

Q.41. A question on the grant application requests the total average daily participation. Do I include the non-reimbursable meals in this total? Does this include breakfast and lunch meals for each day?

A.41. No. The specific intent of the ARRA grant funds is to improve the infrastructure of the National School Lunch Program. Include only total reimbursable lunches served to students. Do not include any breakfasts or snacks.

Q.42. SFA/School Capitalization Policy. Is this our Fixed Assets Board Policy?

A.42. Most likely yes. However, your Fixed assets may include other tangible assets. Consult with your business manager or superintendent.

Q.43. Can we request more than 1 piece of equipment per kitchen? For example a kettle and refrigerator?

A.43. Yes. Complete one School Application for each piece of equipment and staple equipment specifications to the applicable School Application or Central Kitchen or Production Kitchen Application and paper clip all to the SFA Application.

Q.44. School A has a production kitchen that produces meals for other schools in addition to the meals served to students attending School A. Can I request a piece of equipment for School A as a Production kitchen and then request a different piece of equipment for School A not as a Production kitchen?

A.44. Yes. Include a note that you are requesting as a central kitchen and also as a independent kitchen. The SFA will need to complete the School Application and also the Central Kitchen or Production Kitchen Application and the SFA Application.